

2021 STAAR Grade 4 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
1	Option D is correct	In paragraph 8, the author describes how baby elephants react when stressed by “an <u>unfamiliar</u> situation.” The reader can use this context and the prefix <i>un-</i> to determine that the word <u>unfamiliar</u> means “not familiar” or “not known.”
	Option A is incorrect	The prefix <i>un-</i> does not mean “partly,” and the author does not include context that supports that baby elephants are stressed by something “partly known.”
	Option B is incorrect	“Together” is not the meaning of the prefix <i>un-</i> , and there is no context to support the idea that baby elephants are stressed by something that is “known together.”
	Option C is incorrect	The reader cannot use the meaning of the prefix <i>un-</i> in the word <u>unfamiliar</u> or any context in the selection to support the idea that baby elephants are stressed by something that they have “known in the past.”
2	Option G is correct	This is the most complete summary of the selection. The main idea of the selection (elephant communication) is described, along with the different types of communication that correspond to the different sections (“Sound,” “Body Language,” “Smell,” and “Touch”).
	Option F is incorrect	Only sounds are described in this summary, but there are many more ways that elephants communicate, making this summary incomplete.
	Option H is incorrect	This summary is incomplete. Different uses of the elephant’s trunk are described in this summary. The ways in which an elephant produces sound and the different types of body language an elephant uses are main ideas that are not included in this summary.
	Option J is incorrect	Small details, such as the comparison between elephants and humans, are focused on in this summary instead of the overall idea of elephant communication, so this is not the best summary of the selection.

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3	Option D is correct	In the photograph, the baby elephant is standing close to its mother. In paragraph 8, next to the photograph, the author explains that when a calf is tired or stressed, it will go to its mother for comfort. The reader can conclude that the author includes the photograph "to suggest that the baby elephant feels safe and protected when it is near its mother."
	Option A is incorrect	The author mentions that an elephant reacts to danger by flaring its ears or sticking out its tail (paragraph 5), which are not shown in the photograph.
	Option B is incorrect	The author mentions in paragraph 8 that baby elephants stand close to their mother when they are tired of playing, so the reader can conclude that the author does not include the photograph in order to show what the baby elephant does when it wants its mother to play with it.
	Option C is incorrect	Elephants' behavior when hungry is not mentioned in the selection, so the author does not want to show what the baby elephant does when hungry by including the photograph.
4	Option F is correct	A new way that elephants communicate is identified in each subheading: "Sound," "Body Language," "Smell," and "Touch."
	Option G is incorrect	The subheadings are words that are used to describe ways of communicating that all elephants use, not roles within an elephant herd.
	Option H is incorrect	Although the author provides information about baby elephants needing attention from their mother (paragraph 8), the subheadings are not included to tell why elephants need attention.
	Option J is incorrect	The subheadings are included to describe ways elephants communicate, not how they find food, and food is only mentioned within the section titled "Smell."

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5	Option C is correct	When elephants perceive danger, sometimes the whole herd will freeze, which helps them “focus all their attention on the sounds and smells around them” to evaluate the situation in order to avoid danger.
	Option A is incorrect	Elephants’ vocal communication is described in this sentence, but it is not mentioned in relation to danger.
	Option B is incorrect	The subtlety of elephants’ gestures is described in this sentence, but it is mentioned to describe an elephant’s body language, not how herds try to stay safe.
	Option D is incorrect	The author includes this sentence to support the idea that elephants use their trunks, not their eyes, to pay attention to their surroundings, but it is not specified in this sentence that the elephant is paying attention to danger.
6	Option F is correct	The reader can infer from the idea that an “ear twitch may mean ‘I’m done here—let’s go’” that an elephant’s ears help the elephant communicate.
	Option G is incorrect	Elephants’ feelings of happiness and fear are mentioned in paragraph 5, not paragraph 4.
	Option H is incorrect	Danger and large elephant herds are not mentioned in paragraph 4.
	Option J is incorrect	The author explains the meaning of elephants’ body language in paragraph 4, so it is incorrect to infer that scientists are confused by an elephant’s body language.

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7	Option D is correct	By sniffing different smells with its trunk, the elephant can better understand its surroundings. The author includes questions to provide some examples of information elephants gather from smells, such as what food another elephant ate and what kind of animals are near.
	Option A is incorrect	Scientists know that elephants use their trunk to smell and gather information. These are not questions about elephants that scientists are trying to answer through research.
	Option B is incorrect	The author includes these questions to demonstrate an elephant’s sense of smell, not to rate it above other senses.
	Option C is incorrect	These questions are used to suggest that elephants can do more than identify other elephants based on the way they smell.
8	Option H is correct	After Mom explains that Samantha “thinks it’s cool” (line 34) when Bella rhymes and wants to create rhymes too, Bella realizes that putting together rhymes in her raps is a gift and not something to be embarrassed about (line 36).
	Option F is incorrect	Mom mentions she helped Bella study her spelling words in line 24 but does not show her “different ways to improve as a speller.”
	Option G is incorrect	Mom explains that Samantha wants to rap like Bella (line 34) but does not say Bella should play with Samantha.
	Option J is incorrect	Bella talks to Scott about Amy in lines 20 and 21, but Bella does not talk with Mom about Amy.

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9	Option D is correct	Amy thinks Bella should stop rapping because it's embarrassing when the kids laugh at her (lines 6-10). When Bella shares Amy's opinion with Scott, he tells Bella to "just keep on rapping" because he believes her rhymes are funny and good, not embarrassing.
	Option A is incorrect	Scott's response to Bella's spelling problem is expressed in this line, not how Scott feels about Bella's rapping or Amy's opinion of it.
	Option B is incorrect	Scott expresses an opinion about Bella's spelling ability in this line, not what he thinks about Amy's opinion of Bella's rapping.
	Option C is incorrect	Scott tries to make Bella feel better about not doing well on her spelling test in this line by assuring her that she is good at other things.
10	Option G is correct	In line 27, Bella is concerned because she is "used to making good grades" but is not doing well in spelling. When Bella's mother says "you can't <u>excel</u> at <i>everything</i> ," the reader can conclude from this context that Bella is better than others at certain things, such as rapping, but not spelling.
	Option F is incorrect	Bella and her mother are only discussing Bella's concern with her spelling grade. Bella is not trying to do "many tasks at once" nor does her mother expect her to.
	Option H is incorrect	Bella realizes and admits that she has trouble with spelling; she is not pretending to know everything.
	Option J is incorrect	Bella is not good at spelling. She is not afraid of trying different ways to improve her spelling.

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11	Option B is correct	The list of characters before scene 1 includes the characters' names (BELLA, SCOTT, AMY, MOM, SAMANTHA) and information about who the characters are. The character list is included to help the reader identify this selection as a play.
	Option A is incorrect	A well-known theme is something that is included in different types of literary genres, such as poems, stories, and plays, so a common theme is not a characteristic that is specific to a play.
	Option C is incorrect	Although Bella's raps include rhyme, the other lines of the play are description and dialogue and do not have a rhyming pattern.
	Option D is incorrect	Many stories have a problem that is resolved, so it is not an element that is specific to the structure of a play.
12	Option F is correct	In scene 3, Samantha imitates Bella by creating a rap (line 30). Bella is surprised to hear Samantha rapping but realizes that Samantha raps because she admires Bella's rapping.
	Option G is incorrect	Bella does discuss her concerns about spelling with her mother, but the beginning of that discussion is included in line 24 before Samantha's rap in line 30.
	Option H is incorrect	The amount of time Bella studied her spelling words is mentioned in line 24, but the idea of the importance of studying is not expressed in Samantha's rap in line 30.
	Option J is incorrect	Bella says she is "probably not ever going to be a renowned rapper" in line 33, but Samantha's rap doesn't help Bella determine problems with her raps.

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13	Option C is correct	Amy believes that telling Bella her rapping is silly is just as much of a favor as telling her if she had food in her teeth. Amy thinks she is helping Bella avoid any further embarrassment, which is what Amy believes good friends do for each other.
	Option A is incorrect	Amy is explaining why she is telling Bella her rapping is silly. Amy believes being truthful is being a good friend and is not concerned about what others think of her comments.
	Option B is incorrect	Bella does not actually have food in her teeth, and Amy is not concerned about Bella being a messy eater.
	Option D is incorrect	Amy does not see food in Bella’s teeth. Amy just provides an example of why she is giving Bella advice.
14	Option F is correct	In line 1, the reader learns that events in scene 1 occur “ <i>in the school cafeteria</i> ” during lunch. In line 12, the reader learns that events in scene 2 occur in the “ <i>School hallway, one week later.</i> ” In line 23, the reader learns that events in scene 3 occur in the “ <i>Late afternoon, the same day</i> ” in Bella’s living room.
	Option G is incorrect	There is no mention of a problem or hints about how a problem will be solved in the stage directions at the beginning of each scene.
	Option H is incorrect	Bella begins to describe her problem with a spelling test in line 2. There is no mention of her problem in the stage directions at the beginning of each scene.
	Option J is incorrect	Although some characters’ actions are described in the stage directions, the characters’ feelings are not explained.

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15	Option C is correct	Based on the title "The Broken-Crayon Solution," the reader can infer that the author will explain a problem with broken crayons and the solution to that problem in the article.
	Option A is incorrect	The reader does not get any hints that the article will be about different ways to use crayons from the words in the title, "The Broken-Crayon Solution."
	Option B is incorrect	The reader cannot infer that the article will be about how crayons were invented from the words in the title, "The Broken-Crayon Solution."
	Option D is incorrect	Broken crayons are the only objects mentioned in the title.
16	Option F is correct	In paragraph 1 of "The Broken-Crayon Solution," the author describes that Cassidy realizes that her crayons were broken and difficult to use, which leads her to think of the invention.
	Option G is incorrect	The author does not imply in paragraph 1 that Cassidy has many crayons but does state that all of them were broken.
	Option H is incorrect	Cassidy is the only person the author mentions in paragraph 1.
	Option J is incorrect	In paragraph 1, the author does not mention specific colors but states that Cassidy "wanted to use every last stroke of color in each little crayon."
17	Option C is correct	This sentence from "The Broken-Crayon Solution" can be used to support the conclusion that Cassidy made enough money (profit) from her invention "to pay for most of her college education."
	Option A is incorrect	There is no mention of Cassidy's invention or its profits in this sentence.
	Option B is incorrect	The effect of Cassidy's invention on young artists is mentioned in this sentence, but not the profits Cassidy made from the invention.
	Option D is incorrect	The way that Cassidy's invention affects others is mentioned in this sentence, but not the profits Cassidy made from the invention.

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18	Option J is correct	In this sentence from "The Broken-Crayon Solution," the author expresses the opinion that Cassidy's idea for a crayon holder was brilliant.
	Option F is incorrect	In this sentence, the author states that Cassidy had an idea; the author does not state an opinion.
	Option G is incorrect	The author explains a fact about Cassidy's invention but does not express an opinion in this sentence.
	Option H is incorrect	The author states a fact related to the usefulness of Cassidy's invention but does not express an opinion in this sentence.
19	Option A is correct	In paragraphs 3 and 4 of "Bouncing Around," the author describes changes Nissen made to improve his bouncer so that it could be springier when he jumped on it.
	Option B is incorrect	Nissen created and improved the bouncer in order to help develop his sports skills. It was when Nissen took the bouncer to a swim camp that he shared it with others.
	Option C is incorrect	Nissen took action to improve his bouncer; he was not just wishing for success.
	Option D is incorrect	Although Nissen continued refining the bouncer after he invented it, he was not trying to improve the bouncer as a way to plan for the future.
20	Option G is correct	The photographs in "Bouncing Around" include an athlete on a trampoline while competing in the Olympics and a child "Having Fun on a Trampoline" in a backyard.
	Option F is incorrect	It is mentioned in the caption of the first photograph that the photograph was taken in the year 2000, but that was not when the trampoline was invented.
	Option H is incorrect	There are other people watching the gymnast use the trampoline in the first photograph, but there is no one watching the girl in the second photograph.
	Option J is incorrect	Both trampoline users are alone on the trampoline in each photograph.

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21	Option C is correct	The best summary of "Bouncing Around" is presented in these sentences. The main idea (how George Nissen invented the trampoline) and key details (the different ways trampolines can be used) are restated.
	Option A is incorrect	There is too much emphasis on the Olympics in this summary. The purpose of the trampoline invention and its uses are missing from this summary, making it incomplete.
	Option B is incorrect	This summary is incomplete because there is no mention of Nissen's success with the trampoline or its many uses.
	Option D is incorrect	The author dedicates four paragraphs to describing why and how Nissen invented the trampoline, yet there is no mention of these important ideas in this summary.
22	Option G is correct	In paragraph 8 of "Bouncing Around," the reader can infer from the author's description "Today kids and adults jump on trampolines in gyms and backyards to stay active and healthy" that many people still use and appreciate Nissen's trampoline.
	Option F is incorrect	The Olympics are mentioned in paragraph 8, but the ways different types of athletes use trampolines are not mentioned.
	Option H is incorrect	In paragraph 8, the author does not include Nissen's opinion of the trampoline.
	Option J is incorrect	The Olympics are mentioned in paragraph 8, but no date is given.

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23	Option B is correct	Cassidy’s crayon holders described in “The Broken-Crayon Solution” make crayons (a common object) easier to use. The trampoline in “Bouncing Around” is an invention that people use for a variety of purposes (exercise, fun, and Olympic sports, for example), not something that makes a common object easier to use.
	Option A is incorrect	Cassidy in “The Broken-Crayon Solution” earned enough money for college (paragraph 3) by inventing the crayon holder when she was 11 (paragraph 1).
	Option C is incorrect	Nissen created the trampoline with the goal of using it to “improve his tumbling and diving” (paragraph 3 of “Bouncing Around”).
	Option D is incorrect	In paragraph 8 of “Bouncing Around,” the author includes the statement “kids and adults jump on trampolines,” so children can also use trampolines.
24	Option J is correct	Cassidy made her crayon holders to avoid wasting crayons that were broken and difficult to use (paragraph 1 of “The Broken-Crayon Solution”). Nissen made his trampoline for exercise because he wanted to “improve his tumbling and diving” (paragraph 3 of “Bouncing Around”).
	Option F is incorrect	In paragraph 7 of “Bouncing Around,” the author explains that “Nissen opened a store and sold trampolines,” but there is no mention that they were difficult to sell.
	Option G is incorrect	Cassidy was happy with her invention right away (paragraph 2 of “The Broken-Crayon Solution”), whereas Nissen spent time improving his inventions (paragraphs 3 and 4 of “Bouncing Around”).
	Option H is incorrect	In “The Broken-Crayon Solution,” it is not specified where Cassidy was when she got the idea for her invention, whereas Nissen thought of his idea at a public event, the circus (paragraph 2 of “Bouncing Around”).

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25	Option A is correct	In "The Broken-Crayon Solution," the author tells about a short period in Cassidy's life, from when she was 11 years old until she was in college. In "Bouncing Around," the author describes several years of Nissen's life, from before 1934 all the way up until the year 2000.
	Option B is incorrect	This is a similarity instead of a difference because there are multiple benefits for each product.
	Option C is incorrect	In paragraphs 2 and 3 of "Bouncing Around," the author tells how Nissen made the trampoline.
	Option D is incorrect	Only one of Cassidy's interests (drawing) is discussed in "The Broken-Crayon Solution," whereas Nissen enjoyed "tumbling and diving" in "Bouncing Around" (paragraph 3).
26	Option H is correct	In this sentence from "The Broken-Crayon Solution," the author describes the plastic tubes Cassidy used in her invention. Similarly, the author of "Bouncing Around" describes the canvas and steel frame Nissen used to create the trampoline in his garage. In each sentence, the author describes materials the person used to accomplish a goal or solve a problem.
	Option F is incorrect	Nissen was not working on a project when he thought of his invention; he was at a circus, so Cassidy "trying to work on an art project" is not similar to the idea expressed in the sentence from "Bouncing Around."
	Option G is incorrect	Cassidy noticing broken crayons is not similar to Nissen building a trampoline, as described in the sentence from "Bouncing Around."
	Option J is incorrect	Specific materials that Cassidy used to make her crayon holders are not mentioned in this sentence, so this is not similar to the idea expressed in the sentence from "Bouncing Around."
27	Option B is correct	The speaker mentions the size of the fish in line 19, and then she and her brother use a <u>scale</u> to weigh the fish.
	Option A is incorrect	A fish is mentioned in the poem, but the <u>scale</u> is not part of the fish. It is an object the speaker ran to get and used to weigh the fish.
	Option C is incorrect	There is no mention of sounds or music in relation to the fish the speaker describes.
	Option D is incorrect	The speaker and her brother are measuring the fish's weight, not a distance.

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28	Option H is correct	In line 16, the speaker says "Sometimes he let me carry his fishing pole," which suggests that the speaker feels it was an honor or privilege to do so. The speaker also sat next to Max while fishing and is impressed by Max in line 19, saying "Max caught the biggest fish any of us ever saw."
	Option F is incorrect	There is no context to support the idea that the speaker wishes Max would listen to her.
	Option G is incorrect	The speaker describes Max in a positive way, so there is no context to support the idea that she is jealous of him.
	Option J is incorrect	Max is never in any danger, so there is no context to support the idea that the speaker wishes to protect him.
29	Option D is correct	The reader can conclude that the poet highlights when the speaker observes changes in the river by including the seasons. During the winter, Sarah and the speaker "walked across the river" (line 7) because it was frozen. The river was full during the spring (line 11) and was muddy when they fished in the summer (line 18).
	Option A is incorrect	Neither safety nor danger is ever mentioned in the poem, so there is no context to support this reason.
	Option B is incorrect	In line 18, the speaker references the "smell of the summer river"; however, there is no context to support the idea that summer is the speaker's favorite season for fishing in the river.
	Option C is incorrect	The speaker mentions going to the river with her friend Sarah (line 5) but does not say that she became friends with Sarah at the river.
30	Option G is correct	The poet describes the river wiggling through the land (line 1) and specifies that the river is wide (fat) in line 2, looking "like a fat brown thread" to the speaker.
	Option F is incorrect	The poet includes "like a fat brown thread" to describe the river, not different kinds of fish in the river.
	Option H is incorrect	The poet is describing how the river looks as it moves through the land, not what it is filled with.
	Option J is incorrect	The passing of time is not mentioned in line 2, and there is no context to support the idea that the river gets a darker shade of brown.

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31	Option C is correct	When the river floods, it brings parts of trees, perhaps branches and trunks, that the speaker and Sarah use to create "pirate ships."
	Option A is incorrect	The poet does not use negative language regarding the "chunks of trees," so there is no context to support the idea that the river creates a problem for the speaker.
	Option B is incorrect	The speaker does not say she rides on the "pirate ships," just that she makes them from tree chunks.
	Option D is incorrect	The speaker does not express any confusion in these lines. She describes exactly what she does with the pieces of trees.
32	Option F is correct	At the beginning of the story, Phineas excitedly gathers supplies, runs up the stairs to get a shirt to wear as a lab coat, and makes a plan for the dinner.
	Option G is incorrect	Phineas models his cooking experiment after a science experiment because he considers himself a scientist, but there is no text evidence to support that he likes cooking more than he likes science.
	Option H is incorrect	Phineas does not know how to use the stove or how to open the sauce, but he does not think these are unusual kitchen items.
	Option J is incorrect	Phineas makes a plan for dinner in paragraph 2, but there is no text evidence to support the idea that he has cooked before, especially since he does not know how to use the stove.

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33	Option C is correct	In the list at the end of the story, Phineas writes everything he learned from his experiment, which is the result of the mistakes he made: the spaghetti clumps, the sauce burns and sticks to the bottom of the pot, there is too much pasta, and the pasta disintegrates from cooking too long.
	Option A is incorrect	Phineas is suggesting that he has learned some things about cooking, but there is no context to support the idea that he never wants to cook again.
	Option B is incorrect	In paragraph 3, Phineas says that his plan for cooking dinner is "Easy peasy." However, Phineas makes a lot of mistakes that ruin the dinner, so the reader can conclude that Phineas thinks cooking is more difficult than he thought.
	Option D is incorrect	Phineas' pasta is not something the family could eat for dinner. Although Phineas learned some valuable lessons, there's no text evidence to suggest pasta is his favorite meal to cook.
34	Option H is correct	In this sentence, the author suggests that Phineas is embarrassed to ask for help. When someone's face turns red, it is often a result of being embarrassed.
	Option F is incorrect	Phineas is not showing or expressing any emotion in this sentence.
	Option G is incorrect	Phineas is recognizing a problem, but he is not showing that he is embarrassed.
	Option J is incorrect	Phineas is identifying a problem he encounters while trying to cook the dinner. He has not yet asked for help with opening the jar, so he is not embarrassed.
35	Option B is correct	Sarah does not seem to mind showing Phineas how to turn the stove on or open the sauce. She just says "'There's a first time for everything'" (paragraphs 9 and 13) and helps him.
	Option A is incorrect	Sarah does not express any thoughts about Phineas' age and does not criticize him when he tries to cook.
	Option C is incorrect	Sarah shows no signs of surprise when she sees Phineas trying to cook a dinner.
	Option D is incorrect	Sarah helps Phineas do things that do not have directions. Her opinions about the pasta, which comes with directions, are not given.

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36	Option H is correct	Point of view is the perspective from which the events in the story are told. In the first-person point of view, the narrator tells the story from the narrator’s perspective and uses the word “I.”
	Option F is incorrect	There are no pronouns in this sentence to help the reader understand that the author used a first-person point of view in the story.
	Option G is incorrect	In this sentence, the narrator is describing what Sarah is doing. There are no pronouns to help the reader determine that first-person point of view is used in the story.
	Option J is incorrect	Details about Sarah’s actions are described in this sentence. This description does not include pronouns that would help the reader understand that the story is told from the first-person point of view.